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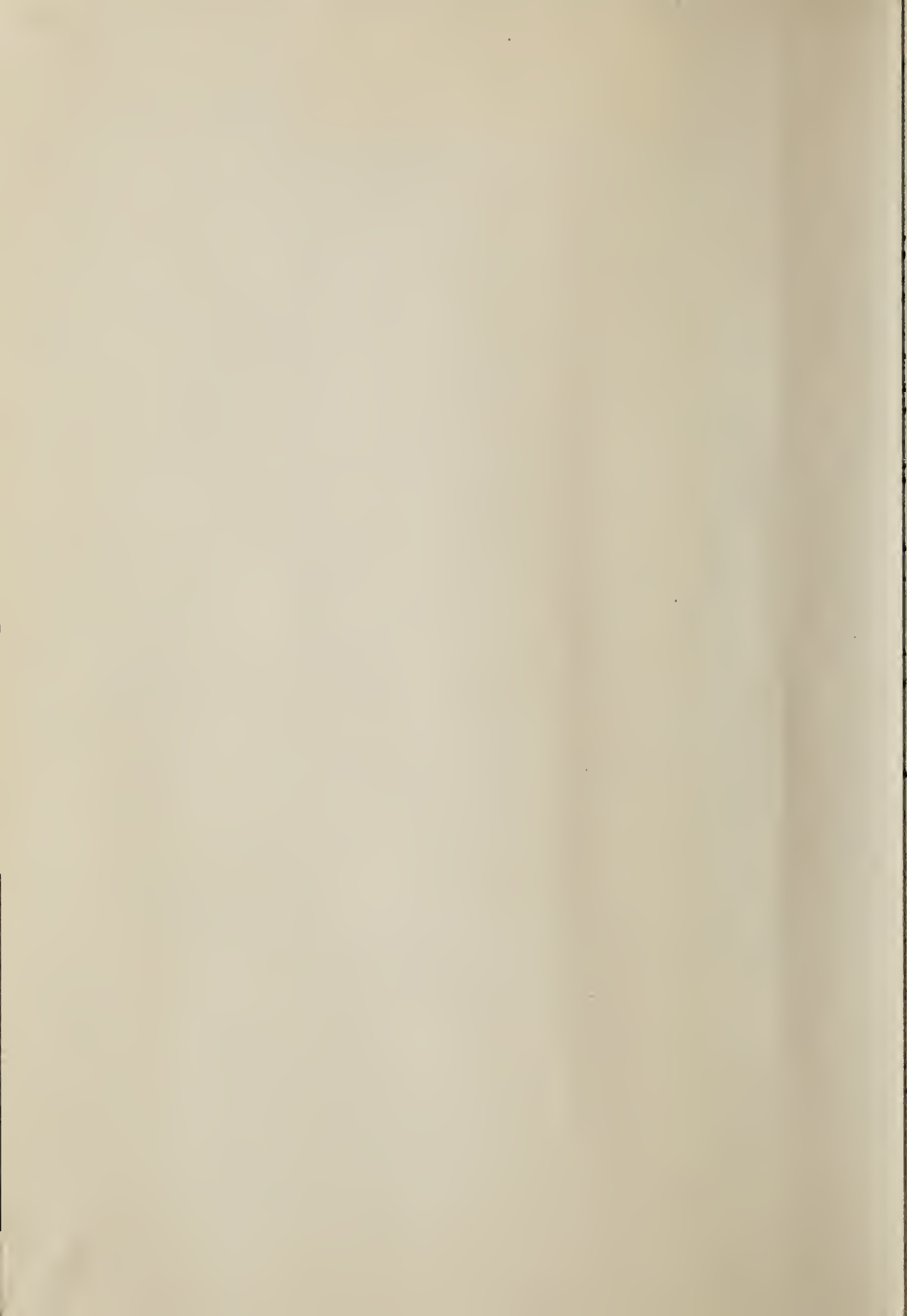
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*The*  
STERLING ELLIOTT  
*Family*



*By his only son*  
HARMON ELLIOTT





*The*

STERLING ELLIOTT

*Family*

BY HIS ONLY SON

HARMON ELLIOTT

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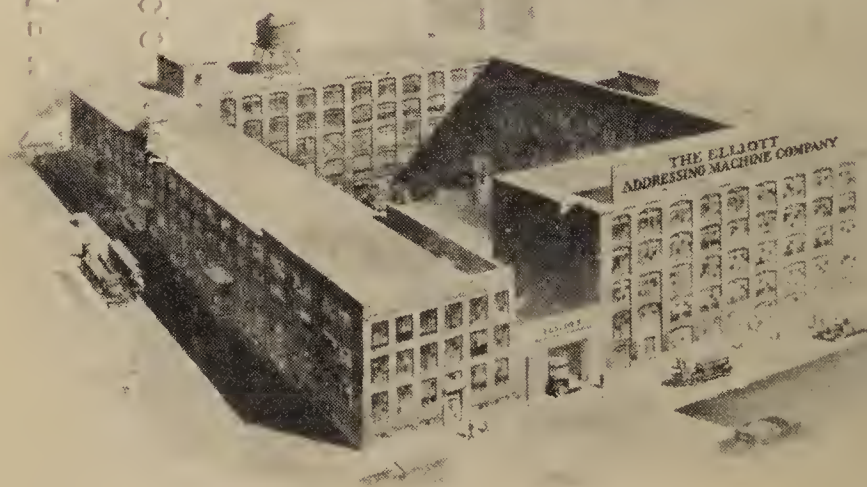
Published by

THE ELLIOTT ADDRESSING MACHINE CO.

Cambridge 39, Massachusetts



The above picture of "The Elliott Factory" was taken from Sterling Elliott's 1888 catalog.



This is an "honest-to-goodness" picture of the Elliott Factory today.



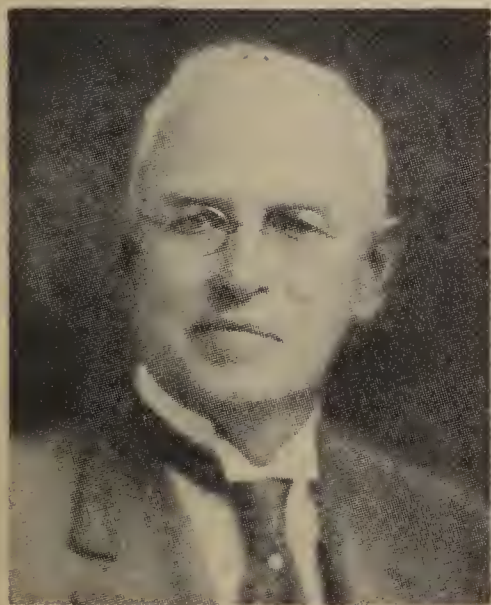
## PREFACE

A FEW years ago I wrote a book entitled, "The Story Of A Father And Son Or Unscrewing The Inscrutable." Whether its popularity was due to its cartoons, or its understandable descriptions of important inventions, or its accomplishment of the rarely accomplished feat of telling a business story in an interesting way, is debatable. But it was a hit and the demand for "more" has been loud and prolonged.

But the majority of these requests have asked how in this age of "misunderstood youth" we were able to break the barrier of age that usually separates two generations and were able to work together as equal partners.

I realize that in devoting this book to answering this question I may not sell many addressing machines, but if I help other Fathers and Sons achieve a similar result my efforts will not have been in vain.

I warn you in advance, however, that it takes both Father and Son to make a happy team, as is proved by the fact that Sterling Elliott and Harmon Elliott failed with preceding and succeeding generations, respectively.



Sterling Elliott — 1852-1922



Harmon Elliott — 1887-

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Sterling Elliott when he was twelve years old.

## Sterling Elliott's Life from 1852 to 1887

### Ortonville, Michigan

**S**TERLING ELLIOTT was born in 1852 on a farm in Ortonville, Michigan, and grew up to learn that he had an unusually stern father and a very understanding mother.

Since his father ran a flour mill, the farm work was entirely turned over to Sterling when he was twelve years old, at which time his father discharged the hired farm hand.

But Sterling Elliott was never in his own estimation overworked, as is proved by his story of what he did when the hired man forgot to keep his promise to take him to town.

The hired man had told him that if he would put a cord of wood in the cellar he would take him to town with him that evening.

He was only ten years old at the time and could only carry three or four sticks at a time, but he completed the job about sundown and hurriedly washed and put on his "store suit" and went to the barn, to find the hired man had gone to town without him.

So he went back to the cellar and by hard and fast work he carried the entire cord of wood from the cellar back to the barnyard and got to bed just as the hired man returned from town.

I tell this because it is typical of Sterling Elliott's belief in the sacredness of a promise.



At the age of seventeen, with the help of his mother, Sterling Elliott packed a bag and left home.

He had always wanted to see men play pool at the country hotel and so he stopped for a rest in the hotel pool room before leaving town.

The sheriff came in and beckoned for him to follow him to the hotel lobby where he whispered, "Your father has told me to find you and bring you home and I thought it was only fair to tell you that I am going to start looking for you in exactly twenty minutes."

### Grand Rapids, Michigan

With his bag in hand Sterling Elliott walked 92 miles to Grand Rapids where he arrived in 1869 with about \$8.00 in his pocket.

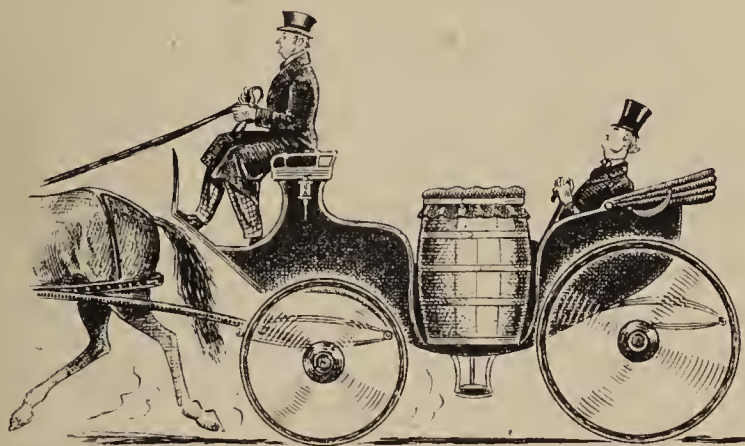
His first job was on the Grand Rapids to Detroit railroad as train boy selling candy and fruit. His employer sold everything to him for cash at "wholesale" prices and he made his profit as he sold it on the train at "retail" prices. He was discharged when his employer found that he had extended his stock by buying things in Detroit and selling them on the return trip.

### Chicago, Illinois

In 1870 he went to Chicago where his first employer was a Mr. Laflin who lived in a mansion and was driven to work in a beautiful carriage drawn by two horses and with a coachman and footman in finest livery.



Sterling Elliott remembers that Mrs. Laflin had all the manners and bearing that her husband's great wealth made possible, but that Mr. Laflin wore an overcoat without buttons which was held around him with a piece of ordinary clothesline, and to save money would buy potatoes and other vegetables by the barrel and make the coachman



and the footman lift these barrels into the beautiful carriage and drive them home to save delivery costs.

Laflin Street near the Chicago River was named for Mr. Laflin, and Sterling Elliott's lifetime devotion to accomplishment, regardless of profit, got its impetus, he says, from Mr. Laflin's stories of Mrs. Laflin's attempts to drag him away from "the thrills of endeavor to the boredom of partaking of the fruits of achievement."

### Introducing Adell Parker

Adell Parker's father was a school teacher and the year before Sterling Elliott left home Philip Parker was teaching at the country schoolhouse that Sterling Elliott attended.



The Parker family lived next door to the Elliott family and Philip Parker kept his horse in the Elliott barn.

One day a big schoolboy had threatened to "lick the teacher" and Philip Parker had quickly dropped his book and grabbed this boy and thrown him out the open school-house window.

That night as Sterling Elliott and Philip Parker were feeding the horses, Sterling Elliott said, "Everyone was surprised in school today to see you throw a boy almost twice your size out the window, but I don't think anyone could throw me out of a window."

Mr. Parker said, "It's a trick, Sterling, and to be a school teacher it's a trick you have to know."

Sterling said he would like to learn it and when Mr. Parker said "When" he replied "Why, now, if you can spare the time."

Sterling Elliott says he remembers that before he could drop his hay fork he was lifted by the seat of his pants and started fast for the end of the barn.

He says he grabbed at two work harnesses that hung on the wall, but in less time than it takes to tell it, he found himself flying through an opening in the wall of the stable onto the dung pile.

Mr. Parker smilingly leaned out the opening and said, "It's nothing but surprise, Sterling."

Adell Parker was Philip Parker's youngest daughter,



and at an early age she became a school teacher; and because arithmetic was her father's subject, she also taught arithmetic.

But one year in June, as school closed, she was told that the woman who had always taught arithmetic in that Pontiac, Michigan, school, and who had been away because of illness for two years, would return in the fall, and so Adell Parker would not be needed in the fall.

She asked if there was a vacancy for a teacher in any subject other than arithmetic and they told her that all teachers had been engaged except for the class in German language and there were two applicants for that job and they were going to be given a test in the fall.

Adell Parker went to a German family in Pontiac, Michigan, and offered to do housework during the summer in exchange for help in her German studies. And in the fall she entered the test with the other two applicants and won the appointment as German teacher.

Since she knew no German at all in June I think this explains Sterling Elliott's statement that he married Adell Parker because she was the only good looking girl he knew whose common sense and brains far outshone her beauty.

### **New Haven, Connecticut**

Sterling Elliott's reason for moving from Chicago to Boston was also interesting.

He had been granted several United States Patents on his inventions, but he had no shop of his own and contracted with others to manufacture his inventions.

His first invention of 1874 was a spring equalizer for buggies and it did not require accurate machine work, but





Adell Parker's father and mother, Philip and Eliza Parker,  
on their wedding day in 1847.

his second invention of 1875 required a better grade of workmanship than he could find in Chicago at that time.

One day he was showing a sample that he had made himself to the proprietor of a machine shop in Chicago who said, "I can tell by the feel of it that it was made in Connecticut."

A few days later Sterling Elliott packed his bag and took the train for New Haven, Connecticut.

### **Boston, Massachusetts**

In New Haven he learned that Boston was considered to be the hub of New England, so he continued on to Boston and in 1875 he opened his first machine shop on Dover Street and from that time on manufactured his own inventions.

In 1882 he bought some land a few miles west of Boston on the bank of the Charles River at Watertown, Mass., and moved into his own factory.

It was small and it bore a mortgage but it was his own.

At about 2 A.M. on the morning of February 18, 1887, Mrs. Adell Parker Elliott awoke her husband and told him to hurry and dress and get Dr. Hosmer.

He sleepily asked if she could wait until morning but being assured that she could not, he walked three miles through the snow and returned with the doctor in time to introduce the Son, and author, of The Father And Son story that is to follow.





Sterling Elliott's mother, with Harmon and Elsie Elliott.



## Harmon Elliott's Early Training

SOME boys are born with a silver spoon in their mouth, but many of them find their fathers too busy to try to understand them.

Because of his experience with his own father, Sterling Elliott said that he decided to handle me as he believed his father should have treated him.

As you read the early results of this decision, I presume that you will be more amazed at Sterling Elliott's patience than by my pranks.

He once surprised me by saying, "A son should not love a father simply because he is his father, for it is not human to respect anything that is not respectable, or to love anything that is not lovable, and that is why from the time you were a baby I have tried to *deserve* your love and respect."

I do not claim that Sterling Elliott's handling of me changed me in any way, but it did make me confide in him.

It is my own theory that children are predestined by nature to be whatever they turn out to be, and that mere humans can do naught but watch the flower or weed unfold.

As for environment affecting success in life, I do not believe that wealth has helped as many rich boys as it has inspired poor boys to succeed in life.

Only God can make a great man, and he can do it in spite of any environment.

### My First Attempt at Humor

Sterling Elliott's first serious talk with me occurred in

1894, when I was seven years old. He came home from work and found a bouquet of flowers tied with a black ribbon to the knob of our front door.

Since his 76 year old mother was deathly ill at our house at that time he tried to explain the shock he had suffered and the necessity of always refraining from jokes that hurt anyone.

### **My Second Attempt at Humor**

One night when father came home from the factory he found my sister's overcoat thrown in the corner of the front hall. We had both been told to always hang our hats and coats in the closet when we came in the house, so my sister Elsie was called to the front hall and asked to explain the fact that her coat was in the corner.

I went along for the excitement, and I guess her expression of bewilderment and my poor attempt to look innocent caused him to ask me if I had had anything to do with it.

If I had immediately confessed that I had deliberately taken her coat off the hook in the closet and thrown it on the hall floor to cause excitement, I would probably have been complimented for my sense of humor, but I postponed my confession until my sister received a severe scolding.

So that was the day I learned that confessions must be quick enough to prevent the unjust punishment of others.

### **My First Battle**

There was a boy in my school who had announced that he was going to beat me up at the first opportunity.

To avoid him I had gone to school the back way, along

the river bank, for about two weeks, arriving at school just as the bell rang.

But one day he caught me in the school yard after school and the boys formed the usual wolf pack circle to see the fun.

I did not fight until I realized that I was going to be knocked out if I didn't. So I did the best job that I could, and was the most surprised boy in the circle when my opponent refused to get up and I found myself no longer a coward, but an esteemed member of the gang.

When father heard about it he said, "After you have done everything in your power to avoid a fight, and then after you have been hit and can see that no older person is going to come to your aid, I am willing to have you start fighting and keep fighting as long as you are conscious. I don't believe in fighting, but that is the only way I know of to get out of such a situation."

Then father bought a set of boxing gloves and a big gymnasium mattress, padded the walls of an alcove in our barn and bought me a book entitled "How To Box." He made a rule that no two boys could box together if there was more than ten pounds difference in their weights, that all bouts must stop at the first sign of blood, and that three rounds of three minutes each was to be the limit of all bouts.

Thus he turned a natural instinct into a game with rules, and bullies in our neighborhood became a thing of the past.

### Mother's Lightning Trick

My mother was also doing her best toward trying to make a brave man out of me, as I found out when she was 73 years old.





THE ENTIRE ELLIOTT FAMILY

Father — Sterling Elliott

Mother — Adell Elliott

Son — Harmon Elliott

Daughter — Elsie Elliott

We were talking about thunder and lightning, and I said, "It seems peculiar, mother, that you never feared lightning. I can remember you taking me out on the porch to watch the sky and see how beautiful the lightning was."

Then she confessed that lightning greatly terrified her, but because she did not want *me* to suffer that terror, when I was a boy she had always concealed her fright from me and made believe that she enjoyed a lightning storm.

### Skidding Versus Skiing as a Sport

In 1902 when I was fifteen years old, my father let me take his Stanley Steam Car, and I can remember a new thrill that I invented to take the place of coasting and skating.

I drove to the edge of a frozen lake where we always went to skate and when on the bank I opened the throttle and steered for the center of the lake.

At the center I pushed the steering tiller quickly so that the Stanley Steam Car would spin around on the ice, sometimes eight revolutions before it stopped.

Since I was the only boy in town who had the use of an automobile, and since I could give this thrill to about nine boys at a time, I was pretty popular until my sister told my father about it.

Believe it or not, he thought it was funny, but made me promise that I would never do it again—not for fear of harming the car, mind you, but for fear of hurting myself and schoolmates.

I tell these things to show how easy my father made it for me to confide in him. He never assumed an older and "holier than thou" attitude.





At this Elliott Christmas Party in 1892, Sterling Elliott celebrated Abbot Bassett's return from a trip by reading the story of the Prodigal Son. Harmon Elliott is standing behind the "Fatted Calf." (Abbot Bassett was the perennial Secretary of the League of American Wheelmen.)



## A Memorable Memorial Day

My next big thrill came one Memorial Day when the High School military drill was performed on the athletic field. The parents and sisters sat in the football bleachers to watch the High School boys in their fine military uniforms, with white duck pants and Civil War muskets and hats.

An old brass cannon was whirled around the field and the wheels of the cannon were changed, in mock warfare. Then the last event of the day was the firing of the old weapon, which had been loaded with a blank cartridge for the occasion.

As they pulled the firing string the cannon boomed out as it had for many years before, but someone (?) had packed it full of sheets of cut toilet paper, so that the entire field was littered with about 10,000 pieces of tissue paper measuring approximately 6x7 inches.

Some fathers would have acted their age in a similar situation, but Sterling Elliott said that the show would have been a failure without this grand finale.

## Tuxedo Technique

When I was in High School I was invited to a dance at the beautiful Newton Club in Newtonville, Mass.

I wore my best dark blue suit, but when I got to the men's dressing room I found that all the other boys were wearing tuxedos. Fortunately, I had on an overcoat, so I was able to sneak out and go home without anyone knowing that I had come to the party without a tuxedo.

A month later I was again invited to a similar party at the same club. In the men's dressing room that night I

proudly took off my overcoat; but when I looked in the mirror I noticed that my shirt front studs had pulled through the buttonholes because the studs were too small. After studying the problem, I realized that the situation was hopeless, so I put on my overcoat and again sneaked out and went home.

I had no tuxedo troubles after that, but one evening I heard Sterling Elliott tell my mother that he could not go to a party because his tuxedo vest was cut so low that the top of his trousers showed.

I unbuttoned his vest and with my jack-knife cut around the bottom of the bosom of his stiff shirt, so that I was able to bring the stiff bosom over the top of his trousers. And when I rebuttoned his vest the effect was wonderful.

I told him that I had learned this trick at Andover, and he always said that he was repaid for the thousand dollars it had cost him to send me to Andover because of the great help to him my tuxedo training had proved to be.

## The Bicycling Era and the First Automobiles

FROM 1885 to 1896 Sterling Elliott made many products, but his principal products were bicycles and trotting sulkies and as a side line he published "The Bicycling World" and was President of the League of American Wheelmen and Chairman of its committee that controlled Bicycle Racing.

### A Tip to Wives

In those days it was necessary for Sterling Elliott to make frequent trips to New York City and when one of these trips had seemed too long my mother packed her bag and announced she was going to New York City to investigate.

Sterling Elliott's mother persuaded Mrs. Sterling Elliott to postpone her trip for one more day and as she kissed her good-night said, "Now, Dell, I am an older and, therefore, wiser woman than you are, so tonight think carefully about the matter and as you do, remember that 'It is not wise to search for something that you do not want to find'."

The next day mother says she unpacked her bag and a few days later Sterling Elliott returned.

When my mother told me this story a few years after Sterling Elliott's death she added, "In our many years of married life there was not one unpleasant day because your father was the noblest man that ever lived."



## The Elliott Quadricycle

In 1887 Sterling Elliott made a four-wheeled bicycle which he called a quadricycle and with it experienced all the problems that automobile manufacturers were later to face.



Harmon and Elsie on Quadricycle

Charles E. Duryea made his first road test of his first automobile on July 8th, 1892.

Elwood Haynes made his first successful trip in his first automobile on July 4th, 1894.

But the steam engine, the gas engine and the electric motor were all invented by others, long before 1892. And every problem of the four-wheel automobile chassis—such



as the non-turning front axle; differential rear axle; self-equalizing brakes; two-wheel steering mechanism, and ability to keep all four wheels in contact with the road regardless of the road's surface—were solved by the Sterling Elliott quadricycle.

This Elliott quadricycle was conceived in 1886, perfected in 1887, and its patent application was filed July 16th, 1888. United States Patent No. 442,663 was granted to Sterling Elliott on Dec. 16th, 1890.

That Sterling Elliott was the inventor of the automobile is proved by the fact that Duryea, Haynes, Stanley, and every other automobile manufacturer in the world paid a royalty to this patent No. 442,663.

(An interesting description of the Elliott quadricycle is contained in my previous book. This book also illustrates and describes in detail many other interesting Elliott inventions and is embellished with humorous cartoons from the famous Elliott catalog of 1888.

A copy of "The Story of a Father and Son or Unscrewing the Inscrutable" is yours for the asking.)

Because of this quadricycle the early automobile manufacturers were frequent visitors at my home when I was a little boy.

I was allowed to sit and listen and, surprising as it may seem, I preferred to listen to the conversation of such famous men than to go out and play.

### Poets, Authors and Inventors

To help publish his magazine Sterling Elliott hired Joe Lincoln, who later became famous as an author of Cape Cod stories; the poet, Nixon Waterman, and the "cowboy poet," Captain Jack Crawford.

I remember the latter's tale of the time he was a sheriff in Nebraska and went out to get a famous bad man. They shot at each other, but by purest accident Captain Crawford's bullet hit the bandit's trigger finger.

The bandit and the frontiersmen all thought it was accurate shooting instead of luck and Captain Crawford said he decided to keep still and accept the fame.

From that time on he said they came to him "hands up" instead of "shooting."

I remember a poem he wrote for the "Bicycling World" about a bicyclist that raced and beat a cowboy on horseback and, particularly, the last line of the poem. The bicyclist was smoking a cigarette and after he disappeared around a bend in the road ahead of the horse the poem ended with "And the smoke of his cigarette came back like a vapory snicker along the track."

I think Nixon Waterman's most famous poem was entitled "A Rose to the Living is More Than Sumptuous Wreaths to the Dead."

Sterling Elliott enjoyed writing for his weekly magazine and occasionally used verse instead of prose.

His most quoted verse was—

"The man who whispers down a well  
About the goods he has to sell  
Will never reap the golden dollars  
Like he who shows them 'round and hollers!"

This verse has been quoted frequently for more than fifty years. Some years ago the Prince of Wales in England recited it to the Travel and Industrial Development Association of Great Britain when urging its members to increase their efforts.

I remember the ride that Charles Metz of Orient Bicycle and Orient Buckboard fame gave Sterling Elliott and me in his first motor quadricycle about 1899, and I remember Charles Duryea and his visit to the Elliott factory in his first car.

### The Famous Stanley Twins

Sterling Elliott sold the Elliott Bicycle Factory to the Stanley Brothers of Stanley Steamer car fame, but we continued to live in the house where I was born, which was in the front yard of this factory.

The Stanley photographic dry plate factory was directly beside the Elliott bicycle factory and the Stanley brothers got their inspiration to build a steam automobile from the Elliott quadricycle, which they said needed nothing but power to become an automobile.

F. O. Stanley spent at least one hour each evening in our living room talking mechanical problems with Sterling Elliott and I usually was allowed to listen.

The F. O. Stanleys were childless and I remember the card that Mr. Stanley wrote and put in my pocket when I was about 9 years old. It read, "Pass the bearer anywhere he wants to go in the Stanley Automobile Factory."

Since I spent much of my time watching them make automobiles I had to show my card many times.

Mr. F. O. Stanley had a race horse and he named it Harmon in my honor. It had the honor of pulling Sterling Elliott's first low-wheeled trotting sulky on its first trip around a horse race track. Later Bud Doble drove "Nancy Hanks" against her own world's record with this Sterling Elliott low wheeled sulky, and because of it she lowered her record by more than seven seconds.





The Elliott home at 48 Maple Street, Watertown, Mass., showing the Elliott bicycle factory on the Charles River bank behind it. This same factory later became the Stanley Steam Car factory.



## Robert G. Ingersoll

The great agnostic, Robert Ingersoll, was hired by Sterling Elliott to defend this low-wheel sulky patent.

I remember him and wondered what he meant when he said to Sterling Elliott, "Tell his school and Sunday school teachers to teach him only what they *know* and let him do his own guessing."

Sterling Elliott had a perpetual pass to the President's box at all bicycle races and I never missed a race at the Waltham and Charles River bicycle tracks.

There I was introduced to the three Butler Brothers and Jimmy Michael and Eddie Bald and Otto Ziegler and Cooper and Zimmerman and McDuffee and many others.

### \*Mr. Stanley's Own Story of His Steam Car

And because it is intensely interesting, I think I will insert here F. O. Stanley's own story of his invention of and early experiences with the Stanley Steam Cars which were made in the Elliott Bicycle Factory in the days that I recall with such fond memories.

"In the fall of 1896 my brother and I began to make drawings of a steam automobile. We knew but little about steam engines and less about boilers.

"Our first car was completed in September, 1897. I shall never forget our first ride. We went out our alley way on to Maple Street, and turned towards Galen Street. A horse hitched to a produce wagon was standing headed toward Galen Street. He heard the car coming, turned his head around, took a look, gave a snort, and jumped so quickly that he broke the whiffletree, but did not move the wagon, ran out to Galen Street, turned around, took one more look, and then ran up Galen Street, through Newton Square and did not stop running till he reached Newtonville Square.

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\*From "The Modern Steam Car and Its Background," by Thomas S. Derr.

"During the fall of 1897 and the winter and spring of 1898, we made three more cars.

"We had many chances to sell these machines, but declined to part with them. Up to this time we had not the slightest idea of ever engaging in the manufacturing of automobiles as a business. It was an interesting hobby, and not a trade.

"Early in October of that year, 1898, there was held in Boston, in Mechanics Hall, the first automobile show held in New England. On exhibition at that show there were, as I remember, four cars, two gas cars, one a DeDion from Paris, the other a Haynes Apperson, a steam car made by George Whitney of East Boston, and an electric car made by Mr. Riker, later of the Locomobile Company. At the close of this indoor meet, an open air meet was given at Charles River Park, Cambridge. This park, you remember, had a third of a mile track, and a grandstand having a seating capacity of over 5,000, and was used for the then popular sport of bicycle racing.

"The evening before this outdoor meet was to come off, the sporting editor of the *Boston Herald* called me up and asked if we were going to have our cars there. I told him only cars would be allowed there that had exhibited in the show. He told me Mr. Isaac Davis, who had charge of the show, would call on us in the morning and arrange for us to be there.

"Mr. Davis came early the next morning and arranged for my brother to take part in the meet.

"There were to be two important events at this meet. Speed trials and a hill climbing contest. An artificial hill had been constructed, having a 5, 10, 15, and a 20% grade. At our suggestion, another length was added having a 30% grade.

"In the speed trials my brother's trial came last. Only one of the other cars had succeeded in negotiating three laps of the track under three minutes. The DeDion car went the mile in 2:58. Then came my brother's turn. He circled the track three times in 2:11, establishing a new world's record. The world record at that time for one mile was 2:32, made in a straight course near Paris.

"In the hill climbing contest the Whitney steam car succeeded in getting its front wheels on to the 20% grade. In starting this hill climb the cars were allowed a level run of only 10 feet. Men had been provided to assist the cars in backing down in order to prevent a possible



accident. When it came my brother's turn I went down out of the grandstand and told Mr. Davis to have the men go to the very top. He thought that unreasonable and the men remained at the 20% grade. The Stanley car shot up to the very top of the grade and my brother held it there by the engine till the men got up to him and helped him down.

"Never, before or since, have I seen such enthusiasm as was created by these two performances of this little car. This was the last event of the day, but we were kept there over an hour answering questions and explaining the construction of the car. And in less than two weeks from this event we had received orders for over 200 cars similar to the one shown there. It was then, for the first time, we decided to engage in the manufacture of automobiles.

"Adjacent to our dry plate factory, and separated from it only by a driveway, was a factory formerly used by Sterling Elliott for the manufacture of bicycles. This we purchased, equipped it with machinery and began manufacturing.

"An automobile ride in those early days was always an adventure.

"The Stanley Steam Car was the first automobile that ever climbed Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. Mrs. Stanley was with me when I made that climb. The publicity that resulted swamped us with orders, but even more publicity resulted from my first trip to New York City.

"Mrs. Stanley and I rode down to Providence in the car, and she came back by train. I put the car on board the boat bound for New York. Had I been the King of England I could not have received more attention. The captain gave me a fine box stall in which I could lock up the car. He insisted I dine with him in his private dining room, and he gave me the best stateroom on the boat, and told me that when we landed in New York, I would be the first to disembark. No questions were asked about how much gasoline there was, or whether the steam pressure shown by the gage was dangerous.

"Some time before we reached New York I fired up and got up enough steam so that when we reached pier 18 I had full boiler pressure.

"As we were approaching pier 18, the Fall River boat came along side, and I was surprised to see on board my friend Sterling Elliott. He too, was going up to Irvington to see Mr. Walker about his addressing machine.

"True to his promise, when the gang-plank was down, the captain

kept the crowd back, and I rode down to the wharf amid the applause of the other passengers. Mr. Elliott met me, and took a seat beside me, and we started on one of the most perilous journeys I had ever taken in my life. The street in front of the wharf was crowded with trucks and conveyances of all sizes and dimensions, all drawn by horses. The horses were frightened and the drivers hostile, and apparently bent on our destruction. How we ever succeeded in running such a gauntlet without a smash-up I have never been able to figure out. But we did, and we soon found ourselves well up on Broadway, where traffic was light and conditions apparently safe. But we soon learned what every automobile driver soon learns: that one is not safe when riding in an automobile. For a girl riding a bicycle, coming down a cross street, and looking over her shoulder, ran plump into the side of our car. The girl was thrown bodily into the arms of Mr. Elliott and was uninjured, but the bicycle was a wreck. A policeman was standing quite near and saw the whole incident. A crowd soon gathered. The girl was much excited and the crowd threatening. But the policeman came to our rescue. He severely criticized the girl for being so careless, and drove the crowd out of the way, and we went on without caring to discuss the matter further.

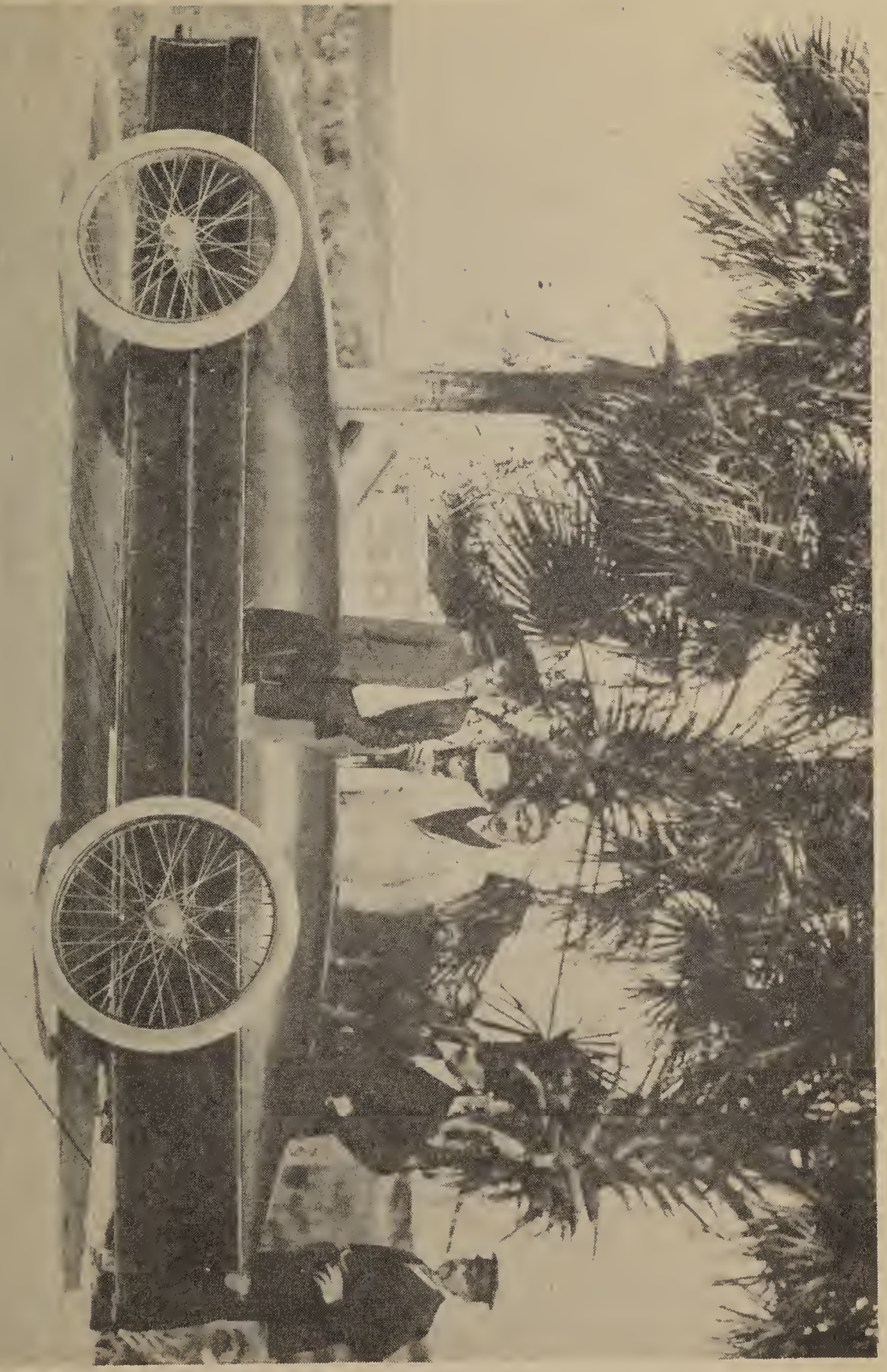
"A few days later I drove the car from New York to Newton, arriving before sundown in the afternoon, thus ending a most interesting experience. Incidentally, I believe that this was the first trip ever made from New York to Newton in an automobile.

"Naturally from the very beginning of the automobile era, there was great interest in the speed of the automobile. And it was discovered that the beach at Ormond, Florida, was an ideal place for automobile racing. The surface of the beach was as hard as cement, and after strong north or south winds, the surface was perfectly smooth. But a strong east wind, which, of course, brought the surf up at right angles to the beach, was apt to leave the surface slightly wavy, and I will tell later what happened as a result of these waves.

"Now Sir Thomas Dewar, an Englishman, and a great lover of clean sport, offered a cup known as the 'Dewar Cup' to be held by the one who could drive a car a mile in the shortest time. This cup was open to world competition, and the first international meet occurred at Ormond, Florida.

"In January, 1906, we entered a car to compete in the Ormond races.





Mr. Stanley (at left) with Fred Marriott standing behind the fastest vehicle (for its weight) that the world has ever known.



This car was driven by Fred Marriott and won the Dewar cup going a mile in 28 1-5 seconds. It also made two miles in 59½ seconds. This was the first car to go two miles in one minute.

"In the following year, 1907, we sent another car to Ormond to again compete for the Dewar cup. This car had a much improved engine, and a boiler designed to stand a much higher steam pressure. Fred Marriott went up about nine miles beyond the starting line. He set the automatic so as to raise the steam pressure to 1300 pounds. When he crossed the starting line he was going at a rate of speed never before seen. But when he reached the bad place in the course the car left the ground completely for a distance of nearly 100 feet, and it turned slightly in the air and struck at an angle, and of course was instantly smashed. The boiler was torn out, and with a tremendous roar of steam from the broken pipe, rolled several hundred feet down the beach. When first reached Fred was unconscious. He had several broken ribs, and a bad cut on his head, but he survived and is in perfect health today.

"When that accident happened, the car was traveling at nearly three miles a minute, or fully 260 feet per second. Now 260 feet per second is faster than the speed of a golf ball when it leaves the club of a powerful expert.

"The most valuable lesson learned by this accident was the great danger such terrific speed incurs. So we decided never again to risk the life of a courageous man for such a small return."

But it is sad to relate that speed was in the Stanleys' blood and F. E. Stanley died in an automobile wreck while speeding on the Newburyport (Mass.) Turnpike some years later.

That accident cured his brother, F. O. Stanley, of this speed habit and he died a peaceful death at the age of 92.

Just at the turn of the century the bottom dropped out of the bicycle business and the Elliott magazine business also failed.

In 1898 Sterling Elliott had invented an addressing machine to address his magazine wrappers, so in 1900 he

formed the Elliott Addressing Machine Company which started to make and sell Elliott Addressing Machines.

About 1903 I found my mother crying one day and she reluctantly told me she was crying because she did not trust my father's business partner, Mr. Nickerson. She said, "Your father is so honest that he thinks all other men are as honest as he is. He owes \$30,000 that he lost when his bicycle and magazine businesses failed, and I am afraid that Mr. Nickerson will get his addressing machine inventions away from him."

That talk with mother got under my skin and I decided right there and then to become a business man and pay off the family mortgage by seeing to it that my father's inventions from that time did not enrich other men.

Facts are stranger than fiction and it is a fact that the role in life which I decided to play that day became the role that I actually did play from 1909 until my father's death in 1922.

### **A Motorcycle Repairman**

In 1904 I spent my summer school vacation as repairman for E. H. Corson's Indian Motorcycle Shop on Columbus Ave., Boston, and that summer George M. Hendee and Oscar Hedstrom let me ride the special racing Indian Motorcycle that they had made to win the Boston Commonwealth Avenue Hill Climbing Contest.

My weight of 92 lbs. probably accounted for the fact that I beat all the other motorcycles up the hill.

### **The Stanley-Bowden Challenge**

And that reminds me of a true story of a challenge that Mr. Bowden of Waltham made to F. O. Stanley for a race



My sister, Elsie Elliott.



up this hill between his 8-cylinder \$20,000 imported Mercedes racing car and a Stanley Steam Car, for a side bet of \$1,000.00.

Mr. Stanley accepted on condition that Bowden in his Mercedes was to go to the top of the hill and face down, while the Stanley Steamer would be at the bottom of the hill, facing up.

Then when a man at the middle of the hill fired a revolver, they would both start and if the Stanley Steam Car did not get to the top of the hill before the Mercedes got to the bottom, Stanley was to pay Bowden \$1,000.00.

Mr. Stanley said that Mr. Bowden was so disgusted with the proposition that he refused to race at all.

### **My Sister's Beauty Helps**

From the time of the talk with my mother I kept my mind on how I could make money.

I had a very beautiful sister just four years older than I (we were the only children).

I went with her to the church dances and she liked me so well that she always let me write my name on her dance card opposite six of her dances.

Mother insisted that we should always dance the last dance together and should come home together; so I was breaking no rules when I sold the other five dances to her admirers for \$1.00 per dance. Thus the church dance parties always netted me \$5.00.

The best tribute I can pay her is to say that from Watertown Primary School through Newton High School I was accepted wherever I went as Elsie Elliott's brother.

In fact, I will always believe that I was invited to become a member of the oldest Society at Andover because



Elsie Elliott when eighteen years old.

important Andover boys had heard that my sister Elsie was the first girl in her Junior Class at Smith College to be "tapped" for membership in the famous "Alpha," Senior Class Society, which, as I understand it, is Smith College's greatest honor.

### A Chauffeur

In the summer of 1905 I answered an advertisement for a chauffeur for a Peerless limousine owned by Mrs. Armstrong, who was the widow of the Armstrong of Boston's famous Armstrong Transfer Co.

I knew how to drive steam cars, but the first day I took Mrs. Armstrong out to drive was the first time in my life that I ever drove a gasoline car and the trouble I had in shifting from high to second gear on Commonwealth Avenue Hill nearly cost me my job. But I soon learned and held the job until school opened.

My sister's social pride was injured because her brother wore a chauffeur's uniform, but I was saving my money and mother and I decided not to disturb her happiness by telling her of the family's financial difficulties.

### How My Father and I Got Control of the Elliott Company

Sterling Elliott owned only 28% of the Elliott addressing machine business when it started. A man named Henry Nickerson owned about 40% and about fourteen other people owned the other 32%.

The fine profits that were resulting from Sterling Elliott's inventions were too much for Mr. Nickerson's greed to bear, and in May, 1905, Mr. Nickerson told Sterling Elliott that his services were no longer needed,



because the company owned all of Sterling Elliott's patents and there was no sense in paying \$3,000.00 a year for an inventor.

Mr. Nickerson and two of his relatives were directors, which accounts for the fact that Sterling Elliott was discharged by a directors' vote of three to two in 1905.

When I heard father tell this bad news to my mother, I sold my motorcycle, drew my money out of the savings bank and handed him \$430.00. That was the biggest thrill in my life up to that time.

The next day Sterling Elliott went to a wealthy man named Herbert Newton and said:

"I own 28% of the Elliott Common Stock, and if you could buy 23% of the stock we could control the Elliott Company. Then we could call a Stockholders' meeting and elect ourselves President and Treasurer."

The next day Mr. Newton took Sterling Elliott to the First National Bank of Boston and opened an account with a deposit of \$15,000.00 and told the cashier to let Sterling Elliott draw the money as he needed it.

Then Sterling Elliott started buying out Elliott stockholders. The plan worked because he offered them twice as much as they had paid for their Elliott stock, and because Mr. Nickerson had gone to Colorado Springs for a vacation.

One of the stockholders sent a telegram to Mr. Nickerson, but when Mr. Nickerson rushed home he learned that he was too late and that Herbert Newton already owned 24% of the Elliott Common Stock, which, with Sterling Elliott's 28%, gave Elliott and Newton control of the company.

Mr. Nickerson tried to issue more stock and there was

a law suit, but in March, 1907, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ordered Nickerson to turn the Elliott Company over to Sterling Elliott and Herbert Newton.

In the fall of 1906 I went to Andover Academy, but I was more interested in *rioting*, "*rassling*" and *recess* than I was in *reading*, "*riting*" and "*rithmatic*," so I told my father and mother in June, 1906, that I was going to work and was not going to waste a lot of money going to college.

From the fall of 1906 to April, 1907, I travelled around to the college towns and sold Coes & Young shoes to the college boys.

In April, 1907, Mr. Newton hired me to come to work for the Elliott Addressing Machine Co. as his assistant for a salary of \$15.00 per week.

Mr. Newton's heart was never in the addressing machine business because he loved to buy and sell stocks and make what he called a "quick turnover."

So in June, 1909, he said to me, "I paid \$15,000.00 for my stock in the Elliott Company and if you can raise \$30,000.00 I will sell it to you."

On July 19, 1909, I handed Mr. Newton \$30,000.00 of borrowed money and he turned over to me his stock and job as Treasurer and Business Manager of the Elliott Addressing Machine Co.

I have never claimed to be a great business man, and perhaps I am not much of a Treasurer, but my deficiencies were offset by Sterling Elliott's mechanical genius.

### From Metal to Plastic

I can remember the day in 1908 when I first saw Sterling Elliott gluing together a fiber address frame and he an-

nounced that the Elliott Company was going to change from metal address frames to fiber address frames.

He said, "I am the first man in the world who ever built a machine through which metal address plates were automatically pushed, and so I am the first man in the world to find out by actual experience that metal is the world's worst material you could choose for that purpose."

Nowadays we sell more than 100,000,000 of these Sterling Elliott plastic permeated fiber address cards every year, and a large portion of them go to addressing machine owners who, like Sterling Elliott, made their first investment in metal address plates.

### **\$2,000 that Shouldn't and Couldn't be Paid**

But let us get back to our Father and Son story.

When I was ten years old my father had a very serious talk with me on the evils of tobacco and alcohol, which he had never used in any form, and promised me \$2,000.00 on my 21st birthday if I would be a total abstainer until then.

On February 18, 1908, he congratulated me on the fact that I had legally become a man and asked me if he owed me \$2,000.00.

I told him that I had smoked cigarettes and cigars and a pipe, and had even chewed tobacco once to see what it tasted like, and I had tried every drink on the wine list.

I believe his answer that day was the beginning of our brotherly relationship and the end of the father and son attitude.

He said:

"I admire your honesty and truthfulness. In fact, I ap-



preciate your confidence so much that *if I had \$2,000.00 I would give it to you.*"

His confession was funny, but true, because he still owed the \$30,000.00 debt that he suffered when his bicycle and magazine businesses failed, and I owed the \$30,000.00 that I had borrowed to buy Mr. Newton's Elliott stock.



**George Hendee and Lon Peck**

These two men were very close friends of Sterling Elliott in the gay nineties. George M. Hendee, was an old bicycle racer. He later founded and owned the Indian Motorcycle Company at Springfield, Mass. It was Mr. Hendee who presented me with my 1902 model

Indian motorcycle; and it was Alonzo Peck who taught me to operate it. "Lon" Peck — who stands behind and between the two bicycles in this picture — started all the bicycle races, and you could hear him from half a mile away as he preceded his pistol shot with his famous "Are the Starters ready; Are the Timers ready?" George Hendee is on the high wheel, at the left.

### **The Woes of an Inventor's Wife**

About this time Sterling Elliott was experimenting with a burner to burn kerosene instead of gasoline in his Stanley Steam Car. But in spite of his experiments, the Elliott family always went out for an auto ride every Sunday afternoon.

One Sunday the maid came into the Elliott living room and said, "When shall I serve dinner, Mrs. Elliott?" And mother replied, "Watch the barn, Nora, and when you see blue smoke coming out of the barn door it will be time to put the meat in the oven."

### **And the Woes of Women in Massachusetts Theatres**

Sterling Elliott always attended Keith's Vaudeville Theatre every Friday night and because he could not see the stage from behind women's hats, he prepared a geometric profile sketch which proved that the incline of an orchestra floor makes visibility possible if no one wears a hat; but that the visibility of the stage was entirely shut off by the average woman's hat.

Then he introduced a Bill before the Massachusetts

Legislature to make women remove their hats in all Massachusetts theatres.

With a personally financed newspaper campaign, clever literature and clever pictures, he got his Bill passed and the newspapers gave him the undivided credit for this law which was the first law of its kind in the world.

Barney Flannigan rewarded him with two seats in the center of the first row of the first balcony for every Friday night's performance at the B. F. Keith Boston Theatre, "so that his view would never again be obstructed by a woman's hat."

The famous B. F. Keith of Keith vaudeville house fame, was Barney Flannigan. B. F. stands for his real name and Keith was the name he adopted because he thought it sounded better than Flannigan.

Some people refuse to believe this until they visit his monument in the Newton, Mass., Cemetery.

## Railroad and Good Roads Crusades

Sterling Elliott was also given full credit for getting railroads to carry bicycles as ordinary baggage in all baggage cars and he was also the first to suggest about 1883, that little sections of terrible roads be modernized so that farmers could get a taste of a good road and then be induced to join the crusade for good roads.

The automobile would not have become so quickly popular if the roads of America had not been improved by bicyclists' efforts in the gay nineties, and Sterling Elliott was the recognized leader of this bicyclists' "good roads crusade."



## **We Become Equal Partners**

It was in 1909 that Sterling Elliott said to me: "Every partner I ever had has cheated me, and since I raised you and know that you are an honest man, I propose that you and I become equal partners and draw equal salaries and equal dividends." And from that day until his death, we did just that.

## **One Inventor Begets Another Inventor**

In all his work around the house and barn, father never was without an eager helper. One night I was holding the kerosene lamp while he was adjusting a machine in our cellar. He said, "Can you see what I am doing?" When I said, "No," he said, "Then what gives you the idea that the light is shining where I can see?"

I believe that my understanding of machinery came from my close association with my father and his habit of explaining his every mechanical idea to me.

One day he said: "Harmon, I have an idea that is not entirely clear to me, but if you will let me try to explain it to you, perhaps I will get it clear in my own mind."

Another day he told my mother that he was not worried about my business ability, but wondered if I would have sufficient mechanical ability to carry on the business.

When I got my fifth patent he said: "Harmon, I see distinct symptoms of mechanical intelligence in you, the best of which is your rare trait of never trying to fix anything until you are sure you know exactly what is wrong with it."

Sterling Elliott's first United States patent was No. 148,681. It was granted on March 17, 1874, when he was 22 years old.

My first United States patent was No. 1,000,501, and it was granted on August 15, 1911, when I was 24 years old.

During his life Sterling Elliott received 104 patents, 42 of which pertained to mechanical addressing equipment.

To date, I have received 107 patents, 105 of which pertain to mechanical addressing equipment.

But during Sterling Elliott's life I acted as business manager to Sterling Elliott's mechanical genius, as is proved by the fact that at the time of Sterling Elliott's death, I had only five patents.

My 107 patents were granted to me as follows:

- 5 between 1910 and 1925
- 8 between 1925 and 1930
- 67 between 1930 and 1940
- 27 between 1940 and 1945
- 11 patents pending as of Jan. 1, 1945

## 1911—1922

### Horse Races

**O**NE day I asked Sterling Elliott to go to the Horse Races with me but he declined saying, "I always knew that one horse could run faster than other horses, and I don't care what his name is."

### Pocket Billiards

After supper every night, from about 1897 to 1911 (at which time I built my own house and moved away), Sterling Elliott and I always went to the poolroom in his attic, where we played 100 points of straight pool.

When we had company at our pool games, he always introduced me by saying, "Harmon plays a little too well to be a gentleman, but since we don't play for money, and he doesn't boast, it won't spoil our good time."

Whenever we spent an evening together from 1911 to 1922 we spent it at the pool table.

### Our Luncheon Habits

On week days we always went to lunch together and we had a trick that prevented either of us paying more than his share of the luncheon checks.

We had a silver dollar that opened up to form a locket and in it was a picture of my mother. It was so well made it would readily pass for a regular silver dollar.

Whoever had that dollar in his change pocket paid the luncheon check, and as he did so he handed the dollar to



the other, so that the next luncheon check would be paid by the other.

We called it "passing the buck." It was just one more scheme to keep our incomes and expenses absolutely equal.

We always had a large round center table in the old Parker House dining room, where our printer and advertising agent and other business associates who had reason to see us would have lunch with us.

One day he surprised a man to whom I had just introduced him by saying, "I used to be Sterling Elliott, but now I am more famous as Harmon Elliott's father."

### "Two Damn Fools"

Sterling Elliott never drove his automobile to the factory, so I always drove him home after the factory closed each night.

One day I guess I crossed a blind crossing a little faster than he thought I should, for he said, "A crossing like that is not dangerous 99 times out of a 100, but did you ever think what could happen if *two* damn fools ever tried to cross it at the same time?"

### Insulting Letters

One day we received a very insulting letter from someone, and I answered it with such biting sarcasm that I proudly took my answer to Sterling Elliott's office for his enjoyment.

He read it with a smile and while complimenting me upon my ability to use sarcasm, he nonchalantly tore my letter up and dropped it in his waste basket.

I said: "That was the original copy and now it will have to be typed again."

He said: "Oh, I am sorry. I didn't know you intended to send it to the man. I thought you only wrote it to relieve your own mind."

I never sent that letter and I have never sent another letter like it. But I confess that to this day I sometimes write such letters just to "relieve my mind."

Father told me that he once published an editorial in the *Bicycling World* that caused someone to write him a letter asking for the name and address of his lawyer (presumably because he intended to sue Sterling Elliott for slander).

Sterling Elliott said that he wrote to the man, making believe he did not know why the man wanted his lawyer's name.

His reply was humorous, and in it he gave the man the name and address of his lawyer, doctor, dentist, tailor, gardener, laundress, minister and undertaker.

The man replied that he always knew that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," but this incident had taught him that "a humorous answer turns wrath into admiration."

### **And the Bank Really did Fail**

One day, when we sat down to lunch at the Parker House, the men asked why my father was not with me, and I told them that he had gone to make a savings deposit in the Tremont Trust Company (which had been advertising a six per cent annual dividend to savings depositors).

When father arrived a short time later, he said, "I didn't make a deposit because the cashier had his hat on, and I figured that if he was ready to leave I had better not deposit my money." (Believe it or not, that bank failed a short time later.)

## How Serious Arguments Were Avoided

During these years I sincerely knew that our success was due to his mechanical genius, and he sincerely believed it was due to my business ability, so there was no jealousy and we were supremely happy.

Of course we did not always agree, but we had a trick that kept disagreements from turning into arguments, which, in turn, might result in bitterness.

We agreed that if we did not agree, either one of us could immediately stop the discussion by saying "Let's lay it on the table." This meant that that particular subject was instantly dropped and could not be talked about until the next day.

I have seen subjects so hot that after an opening remark they were killed day after day for sometimes more than 30 days by the "Let's lay it on the table" trick.

## Sterling Elliott's Story Telling

Sterling Elliott was a famous story teller, and his stories always illustrated or helped prove something that he wanted to prove.

Before he bought the "Bicycling World" he had advertised his Elliott Hickory Bicycles in it for many years, and hundreds of people have told me that they subscribed to it just to read Sterling Elliott's bicycle advertisements.

Most of Sterling Elliott's stories were parlor stories. Perhaps I had better tell one of his favorite stories to show you the kind of stories he preferred.

Chauncey Depew, when a young lawyer, defended a rich man who was accused of murder. The man was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Depew sent him a bill



for \$5,000.00 and from the death house his client wrote Depew a letter complaining of the high fee.

Depew read the letter to some lawyers at the lawyers' club at luncheon one day and asked if they thought his bill for services was exorbitant.

One older lawyer said, "Well, Chauncey, you must admit that the man could have been hanged for less money."

### **How to Avoid Dogs, but Retain Their Owner's Friendship**

Sterling Elliott liked all kinds of animals, on a farm, but he never wanted a dog or a cat in the house.

Mrs. F. O. Stanley had a little lap dog that frequently accompanied her.

My mother warned my father to say nothing if Mrs. Stanley ever brought this little dog to our house on one of her frequent visits.

One July day my mother saw Mrs. Stanley coming up the front walk with the dog and waited panic-stricken as Sterling Elliott went to the front door to greet her.

He said: "How do you do, Mrs. Stanley. Would you like to come in, or would you prefer to sit out here on the porch with the dog?"

### **Sterling Elliott's Only Alcoholic Drink**

At an Elliott convention in the summer of 1921, just eight months before he died, Sterling Elliott and I were sitting at the head of the luncheon table as the caterers were cleaning away the dishes, and I said to him: "After they take away the coffee cups, you get up and tell them that we welcome them to the factory and have planned

this to be the best convention we have ever held; but that you are going to let me do all the work. Then I will take over and you can rest."

Just as the men were starting on the coffee and ice cream, he whispered to me, "I have addressed conventions all my life, and, as you know, much larger crowds than this, but I have stage fright for the first time in my life."

I said, "I will go out in the kitchen and put some sherry in a coffee cup and tell the waiter to put it at your place. It will look like black coffee, but if you will drink it your stage fright will disappear."

He said, "Suppose it makes me drunk," and I told him that if it did I would make the welcoming speech.

So we tried the trick and he had his first drink in his 69 years of life.

When the time came to speak he whispered, "I never felt finer in my life," and he made a wonderful speech.

### The League of Nations

In the fall of 1921 he said to me:

"There are many reasons why the right does not always prevail in this world. So if you find yourself in a minority, even in a minority of only yourself, remember that the majority are usually wrong. So don't lose your sense of humor and don't let defeat with a right cause worry you. For worry and disappointment can knock you out, just as they knocked out the man who went down to failure with the greatest invention of all time—Woodrow Wilson."

### Lucky No. 13

In 1903 the State of Massachusetts decided to register

and number all automobiles, and the newspapers announced that on a certain day automobile owners could go to the State House to get number plates for their cars.

On that day Sterling Elliott caught the first train from Newton to Boston and arrived at the State house as early as possible.

When he got there he found another man ahead of him and of course the other man got No. 1.

The official in charge said, "I suppose you want No. 2," and Sterling Elliott replied, "No, I would like to have No. 13."

So from 1901 to 1921 all Sterling Elliott's automobiles bore plate No. 13, and he once refused to sell No. 13 to Tom Lawson for \$1000.

In November, 1921, when the 1922 plates were ready, Sterling Elliott asked me to register my car with him as co-owner so No. 13 could be transferred to my car, and I have had it ever since.

On Jan. 1, 1922, I went to the Mayo Brothers at Rochester, Minn., with Sterling Elliott, but Dr. Charles Mayo told me that nothing could be done and so on Jan. 28, 1922, we came back to Watertown, Mass., where Sterling Elliott died on Feb. 13, 1922.

He kept his humor to the very end and on the day before he died, when I told him that many people at the factory were asking about him, he smiled and said, "It is human nature to worry about your meal ticket."

### Sterling Elliott's Will

In the Fall of 1921 Sterling Elliott and I signed identical wills in which we left our stock in the Elliott Company to each other.



Thus by this foresight there was no interruption in the business or management of the Elliott Company because of his death.

I realize now that he knew in the Fall of 1921 that his end was near, but he certainly never complained of the pain that Dr. Mayo said he must have suffered.

### In Conclusion

The bronze plaque in the lobby of the Elliott factory was erected by the Elliott employees in 1922. Its text ends with these words:

"The death of no man took out of the world more and at the same time left to the world so much."

These words were written by Nixon Waterman and they express my emotions exactly.

I have enjoyed writing this book to this point, but I cannot bring myself to write the story from 1922 to date, because it would have to be written in the "first person," and I can never forget the piece of paper that I found in my trunk when I opened it in Andover in 1906. It was in my mother's handwriting, and read:

"If you your ears would keep from jeers, these things keep tightly hid—*I* and *Me* and *My* and *Mine*, and what *I Do* or *Did*."

So I say "amen" to a labor of love, and although the business and I have lived for 23 years since the death of my beloved father, I find that nowadays' successes are rather hollow but it pleases me to push higher the torch that he lit.

I fully appreciate the fact that I was blessed with a very unusual father and mother and sister.



My mother, Adell Elliott

My mother survived my father just 20 years and these years were spent in a home that I built for her directly beside my own home.

When the infirmities of age made it seem probable that she would not return to the hotels that she had visited for many years in New Hampshire and Florida they both wrote to me and offered special rates if she would return because they said, "Your mother helps entertain our guests and, therefore, is an asset to our business."

May God grant me whatever it takes to keep cheerful to the very end as they all did. For I believe, as Sterling Elliott believed, that joys should be passed around, but grief should be suffered in silence.

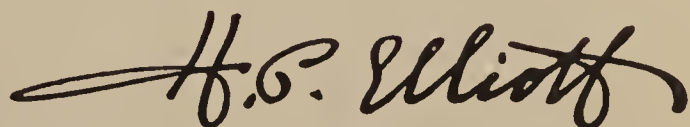
After my mother's death in April, 1942, I was cleaning out her house safe and in it I found a sealed envelope on which she had written, "To be opened by Harmon."

In it I found in her handwriting, James Whitcomb Riley's poem "Away."

My memory went back to that first day at Andover and her message in my trunk, and I realized that even at the age of 86 she was still trying to smooth my path for me.

And this is the end of my story and it leaves me in the mood to read two books which, if their titles express their contents, would probably fit my present thoughts.

They are "The Last of the Mohicans" and Milton's "Paradise Lost."

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "H.C. Elliott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter.



## Harmon Elliott's December 7, 1944, Talk to Employees of Over Ten Years' Service

**Y**OU and I have one big thing in common, and that is this business.

I have given you one-third of all its preferred stock, and one-half of all its common stock, under the terms of my Trust Funds.

It therefore seems wise to devote this talk to the past, present and future of this business.

First let us consider our external problems.

Since at least a dozen Addressing machine manufacturers have folded up and quit business we have become one of the only two addressing machine manufacturers in the United States, and the only stencil addressing machine manufacturer in the entire world.

And because the man who invented and built up the business of our only competing addressing machine as of today, sold out and retired many years ago, whatever inventions have been made by our only competitor since then, have been made by hired inventors.

One of those hired inventors told me a fact that I think is mortally important.

He said, "All of the machines that you have invented, like the Bill Printer and Model 125 and Doublehead, I could have invented if I had known the public wanted them and I had been given *authority* to invent them."

I have given much thought to that statement of fact and I think it explains a lot.

I am in constant touch with addressing machine owners and after listening to their criticism and needs, I have full authority to invent something for them.

This simple difference in our routines has made our product vastly superior.

But in any industry it is a terrific job to come from behind and win over a business that has the profits of a long lead to spend in advertising and selling.

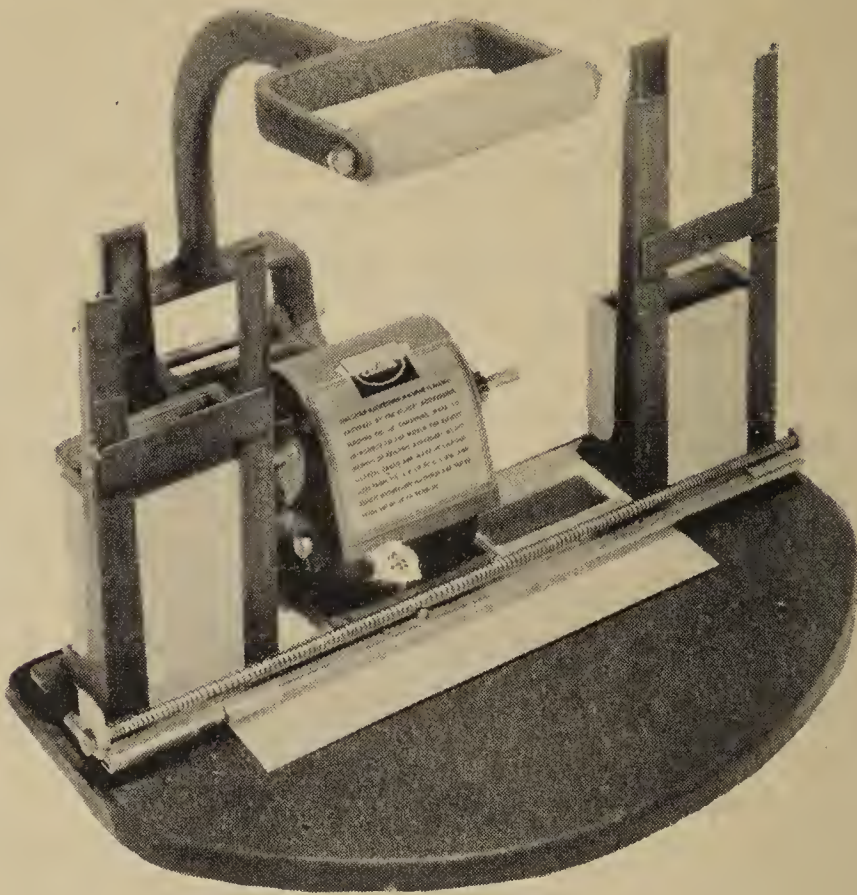
In the soap business where Procter and Gamble spend \$16,000,000 per year and Lever Brothers spend \$12,000,000 per year and Colgate Palmolive spend \$8,000,000 per year for advertising, a man would be a fool to even try.

### **An Answer to This Situation**

We cannot hope to match advertising and selling dollars with a competitor whose profits are much larger than ours, but I think my new idea to advertise not by words and pictures but by an actual sample of our product may turn out to be the trick that will knock the lid off the addressing machine industry.

Here is the little \$35.00 machine that we are tooling up to make for this purpose. It compares very favorably with our competitor's \$90.00 addressing machine, and because its address cards can be stencilled by any standard typewriter I believe we will sell so many of them that the Elliott process of addressing will become better known all over the world than millions of dollars in advertising could make it known.

Henry Ford taught us what happens if you can make a great reduction in price, and the portable typewriter did



The \$35.00 Elliott Addresserette.

to the typewriter business exactly what I think this little Addresserette will do to the addressing machine business.

In brief, it will open hundreds of thousands of doors through which our larger machines will eventually be invited.

### **Our Internal Problems**

My first duty is to the success of this business. It has been my life work. I have fought many attempts to wreck it and I am not going to commit it to anything that in my estimation will harm it.

You are certainly better off than the employees of the many addressing machine manufacturers that have gone



out of business and this fact proves my contention that the very foundation of *your* security is the security of *this business*.

I call your attention to the fact that during the 10 to 60 years that the people in this room have received a weekly pay envelope from the Elliott Company, there have been times when 10 to 20 and even 30,000,000 Americans have been unemployed.

I also call your attention to the fact that the Harmon Elliott Trust funds were set up in 1937 and 1941 and no one had to help you get them.

Also the fact that away back in 1931 I decided I had enough money to see me through life so I ceased paying dividends to myself and cut my salary to one third the amount I had received since 1922 so that I could make this business financially strong for you.

And all I ask for this is your faith, confidence and friendship.

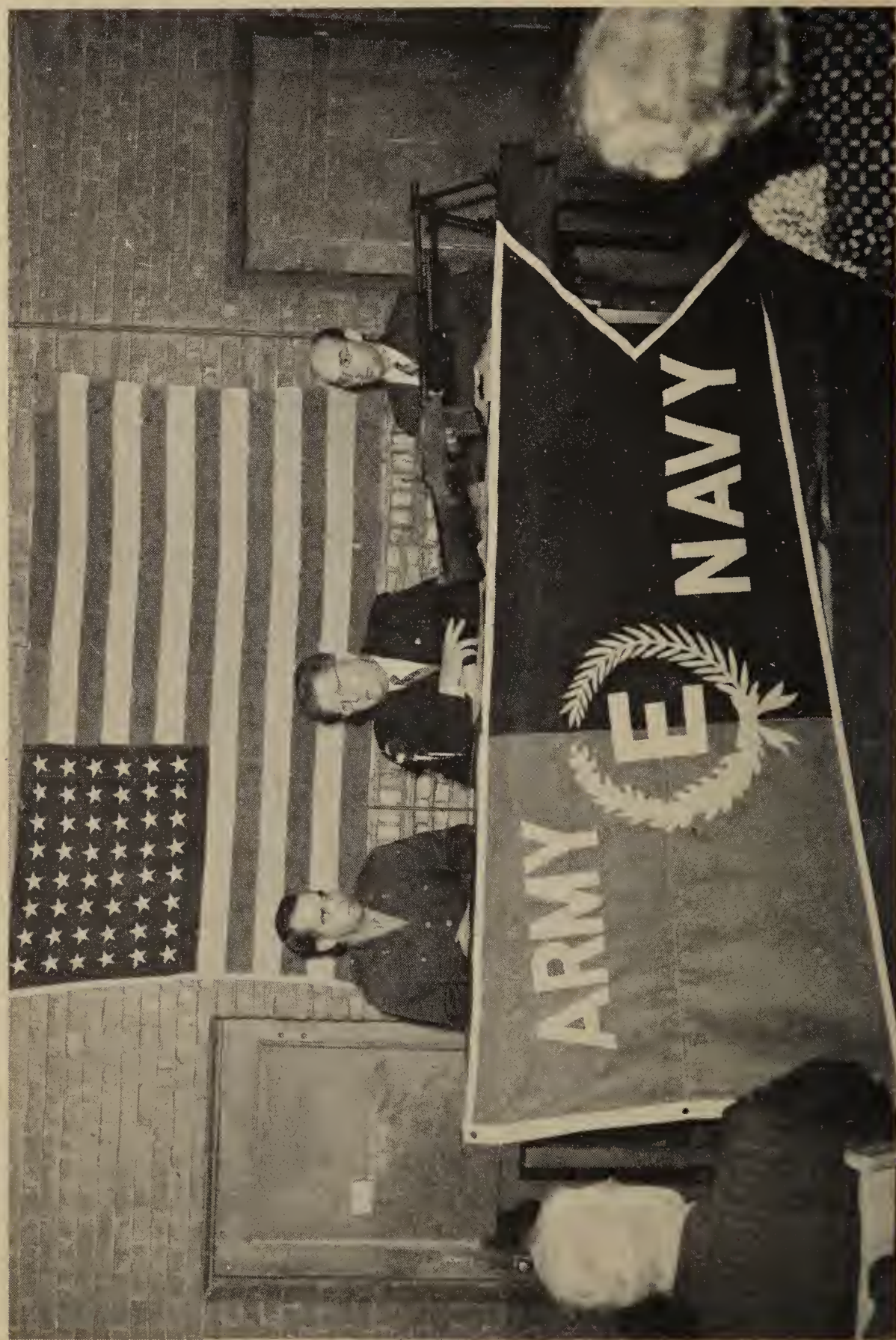
God forbid that the morale and friendly spirit of mutual trust and cooperation ever depart from this factory.

I have suggested to your representatives that when our soldiers return, all employees in this factory who entered our employ since Pearl Harbor should step out to give a returning soldier their job, so that we may not only take care of our own 78 soldier employees but many more.

A great many of our post Pearl Harbor employees are women and I assume that no one wants to see men unemployed while women perform men's work.

### Our Browning Automatic Rifles

In regard to our gun job, I am proud to tell you that the



Harmon Elliott accepting the Army-Navy "E" Award to the Elliott Addressing Machine Company  
on December 27, 1944.



Browning Automatic parts we have made in this factory have proved so satisfactory that we will continue to make them during 1945, and since we have made them correctly and have delivered them on schedule, the War Department has awarded us the coveted Army & Navy "E" which will soon adorn our flag display and your lapels.

The value of the Browning Automatic or B.A.R., as the soldiers call it, is best described by a news item which was published in the newspapers about 10 days ago. It reads:

"Reports from the various combat areas in the European theatres of operation confirm the fact that the sturdy and powerful army ordnance Browning automatic rifle is the weapon most feared and most hated by the Germans. The German infantry consistently tries to neutralize our B.A.R. fire before turning its attention to our mortars and machine guns.

"The ruggedness of this handy infantry weapon was demonstrated recently by a soldier who dropped his B.A.R. under water while crossing the Vulturno River in Italy, recovered it from the river bottom, and started firing as soon as he reached the opposite bank. Although it was dripping wet, the B.A.R. got off all its shots without a single misfire."

### The Union Shop Problem

Yesterday our superintendent told me that he had received a petition signed by a great many employees asking us to make this factory a 100% Union shop.

If the employees who signed this petition really want what they petitioned for, I suggest that they make a study of how Hitler subjugated Germany.



He was elected several times and then his ardent supporters said, "Why waste time and money on elections—let us make it unanimous."

Finally no one but Hitler had any power to decide things and you know what he did, and you know that Germans are now learning "the hard way" what Disraeli meant when he said, "No Government is safe unless it always has a powerful opposition."

And therefore I advise you to study the possibilities if it becomes possible for anyone to say to you, "We will kick you out of the Union and if we do the management has agreed to kick you out of the Elliott factory."

As Shakespeare would put it, "He jests at Freedom who never suffered Tyranny."

Your right to work without joining a union is as sacred as is your right to join a labor union.

I don't blame a man for voting or petitioning for Prosperity in this factory.

Men always do and always should vote for prosperity, but they should study what makes real prosperity possible.

### **The Arithmetic of the Labor Problem**

So you will know how to get prosperity in this factory, I have given you a sheet of arithmetic that I hope you will study carefully. I have entitled it, "The Arithmetic of the Labor Problem." (See pages 66 and 67 of this book.)

Since you cannot eat money, the important question is how much you can buy with a day's pay and my arithmetic proves that the only way the purchasing power of a day's pay can be raised is by raising production.

The arithmetic I have given you plainly proves that the six following theories are nonsense:

1. Drop the Bedaux System and adopt the Classified Wage Scale.
2. Keep shortening the hours of labor until there are jobs for all.
3. Make the job last longer and thus benefit the laboring man.
4. Pay the same wages for 40 hours that we now pay for 60 hours.
5. Don't let a man temporarily do a job that is not in his class, even if it will help his Foreman get a rush job done on time.
6. See how many men can spend company time talking instead of working every day.

You will think of many others, but you will find that they all either decrease production or increase the cost of production and so inevitably cut the purchasing power of a day's pay.

Some people have told me that there are many things other than labor that enter the cost of things, but that is not true because one manufacturer's material is produced by another manufacturer's labor and by this process you will find that nothing enters costs but labor all the way back to the mines where labor digs the holes and wells, but Mother Nature gives all basic materials free.

Even taxes pay for the labor that Cities, Counties, States and our Federal Government must hire, and the same can be said for rent, light, heat, power, etc., etc.

Then I have been told that I have not figured profit in the cost of things, but I can quickly prove to you that adding profit won't change the figures in the least.

To prove it, let us suppose that all prices are set by simply doubling costs.

If you will double all cost prices in the examples I have used you will get comparatively the same results when you figure production up and down and a day's pay up and down.

And if you are good at arithmetic and like to figure fractions, you can set profit at 1% or 10% or 25% and you will get the same comparative results you got when you set profit at 100% by doubling costs.

When Wendell Willkie went to Russia, he was amazed to find incentive pay in Russian factories and he found that the highest paid man in a large Russian munitions factory got ten times as much as the lowest paid man.

Mr. Willkie said the Russians were equally amazed and incredulous to learn from him that Union labor leaders in America were working for the adoption of the Classified Wage Scale.

### Worries and Consolations

But I think we can safely say that Communism is not to be tried in America because 21,000,000 of us voted for Mr. Dewey who constantly denounced it, and the other 24,000,000 of us voted for President Roosevelt who certainly denounced it when he said, "I want no Communist to vote for me."

And the New Deal recognizes that capital must be hired and paid just as labor is hired and paid, because in our present tax laws they say that Elliott capital is entitled to 8% profit or dividends or rent per year before the excess profit tax shall be applied to the Elliott Addressing Machine Company's earnings.



But when we read of endless strikes that are stopped only because the war is not yet won, all business men naturally worry.

I console myself, however, by the fact that I can see no force or group in this country who can harm this business without harming themselves.

If the Government harms business we will have a depression and all men "vote for a change" when a depression rolls around no matter whose fault it is.

If the Elliott employees harm this business they will saw off the limb they are sitting on, and the dividends to my Trust Fund beneficiaries would certainly cease.

But I call your attention to another asset that means much to all of us, an asset that is so delicate that it can die without an overt act.

Sterling Elliott spoke of it as an atmosphere in which a Goose would want to continue to lay Golden Eggs and a man would joyfully continue to do his best work.

Let's not lose it in this factory.

—Harmon P. Elliott

## The Arithmetic of the Labor Problem

To avoid complications, I have ignored the fact that laboring men buy the products of each other and have assumed that they buy only the product that they themselves produce.

*If a man gets  
per day  
\$1.00*

*And if he pro-  
duces per day  
1 pound*

*The cost of  
production is  
\$1.00 per lb.*

*So with his day's  
pay he could buy  
1 pound*

Now let us raise his pay to \$2.00 per day although he does not increase his production, and the following figures show he is no better off.

\$2.00

1 pound

\$2.00 per lb.

1 pound

Now let him double his production but leave his pay at \$2.00 per day, and the following figures show he has doubled his purchasing power.

\$2.00

2 pounds

\$1.00 per lb.

2 pounds

Now let us try cutting working hours but pay same wages for shorter hours.

First let us figure an 8 hour day at \$2.00 per day.

*If wages are  
\$2.00*

*And day's work  
is set at  
8 hours*

*And a man can produce  
1 lb. per hr., the day's  
production would be*

8 pounds

*And the cost of  
production  
would be*

.25 per lb.

*And a day's pay  
will buy*

8 lbs.

Now let us cut working hours from 8 hours to 6 hours a day but leave wages at \$2.00 per day.

|        |         |          |                  |        |
|--------|---------|----------|------------------|--------|
| \$2.00 | 6 hours | 6 pounds | $.33\frac{1}{3}$ | 6 lbs. |
|--------|---------|----------|------------------|--------|

And this is very harmful because you see it cuts the purchasing power of a day's pay 25%.

Now that we have proved that raising wages won't help and cutting hours of labor is very harmful, let us see if incentive pay will help.

*They each produce 2 lbs.*

|   |         |           |     |          |
|---|---------|-----------|-----|----------|
| 10 men each get \$1.00 per day<br>so day's payroll is | \$10.00 | 20 pounds | .50 | 2 pounds |
|   |         |           |     |          |
|   |         |           |     |          |

*The cost per pound is  
therefore*

*And a day's pay  
will buy*

Now suppose by extra effort one of the 10 men doubles his production and produces 4 pounds per day, and we therefore double his pay, but since the other 9 men produce only 2 pounds each per day we do not change their pay.

*Now the 10*

*men combined*

*get total of*

*\$11.00*

*And their*

*combined daily*

*production is*

*22 pounds*

*So the total cost*

*per pound is*

*.50*

*And the nine men*

*can still buy with*

*their day's pay*

*2 pounds*

But the man who produced four pounds per day and got \$2.00 per day can buy 4 pounds with his day's pay. Thus he benefited and his fellow workers were not harmed and can better themselves if they follow his example and increase their personal production.



ON pages 69, 70 and 71 you will find three of the humorous "Factory Views" that appeared in the Sterling Elliott catalog of 1888.

We show these here for the purpose of causing you to send for our popular "Unscrewing the Inscrutable" booklet which contains all fourteen of these cartoons.



Scene on the coast of South Africa. Natives gathering and loading leaves of the plant (*Hevea*), to be used in the manufacture of Elliott's Rubber Bicycle Tires.





Our corps of merciless inspectors testing the Elliott Hickory Wheels.



View in the "assembling" room.



# ELLIOTT PUBLICATIONS

*available to business executives upon request*

1. Booklet describing the Elliott Cardvertiser which *prints and addresses* cards.
2. Book on the Elliott System for Laundries.
3. Book on the Elliott System for Banks and Trust Companies.
4. Book on the Elliott System for Publishers.
5. Book on the Elliott System for Public Utility Companies.
6. Book on the Elliott System for Coal Dealers.
7. Book on the Elliott System for Payroll Work.
8. Book on the Elliott System for Insurance Companies.
9. Book on the Elliott System for Tax Work.
10. General Catalog.
11. Bulletin on Elliott Addressing-Installment Coupon Machine.
12. Bulletin on Elliott Addressing and Post-Card Printing Machines for R. E. M. C. Organizations.



# ELLIOTT ADDRESSING MACHINE COMPANY

Factory and General Offices

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS, U. S. A.

## *Branch Offices in the United States*

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|                             |  |              |
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| TORONTO 1, ONT. . . . .     | The Elliott Co., 137 Wellington St. W. . . . . | ELgin 4040   |



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